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LETTER DATED 13 APRIL 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a note explaining the political situation prevailing in Rwanda since the assassination on 6 April 1994 of the President of the Rwandese Republic, Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana.

This note, issued by the Rwandese Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, describes the measures taken by the interim Government to provide security for people and property throughout Rwandese territory.

The Rwandese Government remains deeply committed to the search for a political solution to the Rwandese conflict within the framework of the Arusha peace agreement.

In this connection, it has set itself the goal of pursuing the discussions with the Rwandese Patriotic Front for the establishment, without delay, of broad-based transitional institutions as provided for in the Arusha peace agreement and reaffirmed in the relevant resolutions and declarations of the Security Council.

The Rwandese Government again emphasizes the need to establish an immediate cease-fire with a view to putting an end to the hostilities and creating a climate conducive to full implementation of the Arusha peace agreement.

Lastly, the Rwandese Government would like to stress that an expanded and continuing presence by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) represents, at this critical phase in the peace process in Rwanda, a stabilizing factor in the present situation.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Jean-Damascène BIZIMANA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Note explaining the political situation prevailing in Rwanda since the death of President Juvénal Habyarimana

About 9.30 p.m. on 6 April 1994, the plane on which the President of the Rwandese Republic, Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana, was returning crashed at Grégoire Kayibanda International Airport at Kanombe (Kigali), after being fired upon by elements not yet identified.

The head of State died instantly, together with Mr. Cyprien Ntaryamira, President of the Republic of Burundi, two other members of the Government of Burundi, the Chief of Staff of the Rwandese armed forces, Major-General Déogratias Nsabimana, Ambassador Juvénal Renzaho, Major Thaddée Bagaragaza, and the crew. A total of 12 people perished.

The death of the Rwandese head of State surprised and stunned the Rwandese people, and also caused indignation among certain military personnel, who reacted spontaneously in attacking certain persons under the suspicion or presumption of responsibility for or complicity in the assassination of the head of State.

It was against that background that massacres took place, particularly in Kigali, where the Prime Minister, Ms. Agathe Uwilingiyimana, died.

Subsequently, the widespread insecurity, especially in the city of Kigali, and the death of the Prime Minister and certain other Rwandese political leaders prompted the high command of the Rwandese army and the Gendarmerie to set up a Crisis Committee.

The Committee immediately took initiatives aimed at restoring peace in the country. To that end, it made two major decisions:

First, it called on the five political parties forming the transitional Government headed by the late Ms. Agathe Uwilingiyimana to meet in order to examine the political situation prevailing in Rwanda and seek appropriate solutions to the grave political problems;

Secondly, the Crisis Committee requested, through UNAMIR, the signing of a cease-fire agreement in Kigali, following the emergence of the members of the battalion of the Rwandese Patriotic Front which had been in a section of the building of the National Development Council, and following the many attacks by those members on the military camp of the Presidential Guard situated not far away (at Kimihurura), and on other targets in various parts of the city of Kigali.

The proposal for a cease-fire agreement was rejected by the Rwandese Patriotic Front, which had begun the hostilities in the city of Kigali. Fighting therefore continued in certain sections of the city.

In addition to rejecting the proposal, the Rwandese Patriotic Front began hostilities on the northern front, attacking positions of the Rwandese army in the Mutara area, at Byumba and Ruhengeri. Today the fighting still continues.

In response to the request from the Crisis Committee, the leaders of the five political parties which, prior to these events, had formed the transitional Government met and decided to form a new transitional Government.

On Saturday, 9 April 1994, the transitional Government, headed by Mr. Jean Kambanda, took the oath of office before the new head of State. Pursuant to the Constitution of the Rwandese Republic of 10 June 1991, specifically article 42, Mr. Théodore Sindikubwabo, Chairman of the National Development Council, assumed the office of President of the Republic and was thus able to install the new Government, thus filling the institutional vacuum created after the death of the former President of the Republic and the former Prime Minister.

The new transitional Government has set itself three major objectives:

(a) To ensure effective management of the affairs of the State, with special emphasis on the rapid restoration of order, and on the security of people and property;

(b) To pursue discussions with the Rwandese Patriotic Front for the establishment of the broad-based transitional institutions, within not more than six weeks;

(c) To tackle aggressively the problem of food shortages, by seeking ways and means of assisting the victims in certain prefectures and those who have been displaced by the war.

Immediately after taking the oath of office, the members of the Government held a cabinet meeting to assess political conditions and, especially, the security situation. The cabinet took a number of measures aimed at restoring security for people and property all over the nation.

Outside the cabinet, the Minister for Foreign Affairs initiated a series of discussions with the diplomatic corps accredited to Kigali, so as to inform the diplomatic community about the political situation in Rwanda and the goals of the new transitional Government, and to request it to provide support for the attainment of those goals, primarily the establishment of the broad-based transitional institutions to include the Rwandese Patriotic Front in a short-term perspective.

The installation of this Government has given the Rwandese people renewed hope, and there has been a marked decrease in murder and looting across the nation.

At the same time, the new Government and the local authorities have gradually been regaining control of the situation.

The immediate objective is to stop the massacre of civilians, to resume talks with the Rwandese Patriotic Front in order to break the log-jam and establish the broad-based transitional institutions, and to revive socio-economic activity in Rwanda.

Kigali, 10 April 1994.

(Signed) Jérôme C. BICAMUMPAKA
Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Cooperation of the Rwandese Republic